The Importance & Purpose of Consecration

Study guide Overview

This time we cover the importance of consecration and purpose behind it.

We will begin with questions that you are encouraged to study personally, followed by quotes that substantiate the points being made (for your personal reference).

Major Questions

- Is it an eternal law?
- Is it essential to exaltation?
- What does it help us (and others) to achieve?

Study Suggestions

•Print out this study guide
•Begin your study with prayer, praying for God to reveal the truth to you through His Spirit.
•Consider any questions, looking up any references for yourself.
•Find answers within the scriptures, the teachings of Joseph Smith, the Journal of Discourses etc. (Discussing them with your spouse or a close friend if possible)
•Be conscious of the Spirit throughout your studies, and close with prayer.
•Make a list of any additional questions you might have (to share with the Seventy who gave you this guide.)

Contents

Consecration Concepts....2
Is Consecration Essential?....2
What is the purpose of the Law of Consecration?....3
Consecration Conclusions....4
Consecration is Essential....4
The Purpose of the Law of Consecration....5
Is It Wrong To Live In Our Day?....7
A Proclamation on the Economy....8
Letter Questions....10

Note: Some passages may have been summarized for brevity. We encourage the reader to read the passages in full to be sure of their content and context.

Consecration Concepts

Is Consecration Essential?

When has this law been lived?

Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35
3 Nephi 26:19
4 Nephi 1:3
Moses 7:18

Will it ever cease?

D&C 78:4,11
D&C 82:20

Are any exempt from this law?

D&C 70:10

What are the results of not living it?

D&C 104:4-5

Can Zion progress / exist without it?

D&C 105:5

What is the purpose of the Law of Consecration?

Who is it to care for?

D&C 42:31
TPJS 127 When we consecrate our property to the Lord ...

What about those who aren't poor?

2 Corinthians 8:14
D&C 49:20
D&C 70:14
D&C 78:5
D&C 104:16

Whose needs should be met?

Ecclesiastes 5:9
D&C 51:3
D&C 82:17

What can it help us overcome?

D&C 42:40
see 2 Thessalonians 3:10

What does help the Saints to achieve?

D&C 42:35
D&C 78:14

What does it help us to build up?

D&C 82:18-19
D&C 51:9

Consecration Conclusions

Consecration is Essential

This law has been lived throughout time

> "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all [men], as every man had need." *(Acts 2:44-45)*
>
> "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid [them] down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." *(Acts 4:34-35, v. 37)*

"... they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly, one with another." *(3 Nephi 26:19)*

"And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift." *(4 Nephi 1:3, see v. 15-18)*

"And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them." *(Moses 7:18)*

This law will not cease

"For a permanent and everlasting establishment and order unto my church, to advance the cause, which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father who is in heaven;

Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, to prepare and organize yourselves by a bond or everlasting covenant that cannot be broken." *(D&C 78:4,11)*

"This order have I appointed to be an everlasting order unto you and unto your successors, inasmuch as you sin not." *(D&C 82:20)*

No-one is exempt from this law

"And behold, none are exempt from this law who belong to the church of the living God;" *(D&C 70:10)*

Will be cursed for not living it

"Therefore, inasmuch as some of my servants have not kept the commandment, but have broken the covenant through covetousness, and with feigned words, I have cursed them with a very sore and grievous curse.

For I, the Lord, have decreed in my heart, that inasmuch as any man belonging to the order shall be found a transgressor, or, in other words, shall break the covenant with which ye are bound, he shall be cursed in his life, and shall be trodden down by whom I will;" *(D&C 104:4-5)*

Zion cannot progress / exist without it

"And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself." *(D&C 105:5, see v.3)*

"Call ye, call ye, upon the inhabitants of Zion, to organise themselves in the order of Enoch, in the new and everlasting covenant, according to the order of heaven, for the furtherance of my kingdom upon the earth, for the perfection of the Saints, for the salvation of the living and the dead." *(Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 17:154)*

The Purpose of the Law of Consecration

It is how we support the poor

"And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me; and they shall be laid before the Bishop of my Church and his counsellors, two of the Elders or High Priests ..." *(D&C 42:31)*

"When we consecrate our property to the Lord it is to administer to the wants of the poor and needy, for this is the law of God; it is not for the benefit of the rich, those who have no need." *(Joseph Smith, Teachings, p. 127)*

"Respecting how much a man of property shall give annually we have no special instructions to give; he is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted ..." *(Joseph Smith, Times and Seasons 3:732)*

All should be equal

"But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin." *(D&C 49:20)*

"... in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld." *(D&C 70:14)*

"That you may be equal in the bonds of heavenly things, yea, and earthly things also, for the obtaining of heavenly things." *(D&C 78:5)*

"behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low." *(D&C 104:16)*

"For it is the will of the Lord that the Church be made equal in all things." *(Revelations to Joseph Smith 1832, Unpublished Revelations 13:7, see 31:16)*

Everyones needs should be met

"Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: ..." *(Ecclesiastes 5:9)*

"Wherefore, let my servant ... appoint unto this people their portions, every man equal according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs." *(D&C 51:3)*

"And you are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships, every man according to his wants and his needs, inasmuch as his wants are just -" *(D&C 82:17)*

It helps us overcome pride and idleness

"And again, thou shalt not be proud in thy heart; let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands." *(D&C 42:40)*

"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." *(2 Thessalonians 3:10)*

To build up the kingdom of God

"And for the purpose of purchasing lands for the public benefit of the Church, and building houses of worship ..." (D&C 42:35)

"That through my providence ... that the Church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world." *(D&C 78:14)*

Helps Saints develop talents, charity and unity

"And all this for the benefit of the Church of the living God, that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, to become the common property of the whole Church –

Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God." *(D&C 82:18-19)*

"And let every man deal honestly, and be alike among this people, and receive alike, that ye may be one, even as I have commanded you." *(D&C 51:9)*

Is It Wrong To Live In Our Day?

Brigham Young –

"I will say, first, that the Lord Almighty has not the least objection in the world to our entering into the Order of Enoch. I will stand between the people and all harm in this. He has not the least objection to any man, every man, all mankind on the face of the earth turning from evil and loving and serving him with all their hearts. With regard to all those orders that the Lord has revealed, it depends upon the will and doings of the people, and we are at liberty, from this Conference, to go and build up a settlement, or we can join ourselves together in this city, do it legally—according to the laws of the land—and enter into covenant with each other by a firm agreement that we will live as a family, that we will put our property into the hands of a committee of trustees, who shall dictate the affairs of this society. If any man can bring up anything to prove to the contrary I am willing to hear it. But no man can do it."

(General Conference, 7 April 1873, Journal of Discourses 16:8-9.)

Lorenzo Snow –

"It is argued by some that when the principle of tithing came in, it supersede the principles of the United Order. The law of Moses was given to be a school-master, to bring the people to a knowledge of the Son of God, and induce them to obey the principles of the fulness of the Gospel. The higher law was given to the children of Israel when they were first delivered from Egyptian bondage, but in consequence of their disobedience, the Gospel in its fulness was withdrawn and the law of carnal commandments was added. Now, do you imagine that there would have been any wrong if the people wanted to find the principle of the higher law and obey them as near as circumstances would admit? Do you suppose it would have been wrong to search out the fulness of the Gospel, while living under the Mosaic law? But, in the Book of Mormon we find this point more fully illustrated. We find that the inhabitants of this continent had a knowledge of the fulness of the everlasting Gospel and were baptized for the remission of sins, many generations before Jesus came into the world. We find that Alma was baptized in the waters of Mormon, and some four hundred and fifty other individuals. Alma, by his energy and perseverance, had discovered the fulness of the Gospel and obtained revelations from the Lord, and the privilege of observing the Gospel in all its fulness and blessings. Do you think the Lord was angry with them? They were under the Mosaic law, and yet considered it a blessing to observe the higher law."

(21 April 1878, Journal of Discourses 19:344-345)

A Proclamation on the Economy

A pamphlet issued by the
First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve[1]
10th July 1875

To The Latter-day Saints -

The experience of mankind has shown that **the people of communities and nations among whom wealth is the most equally distributed, enjoy the largest degree of liberty, are the least exposed to tyranny and oppression and suffer the least from luxurious habits which beget vice**. Among the chosen people of the Lord, to prevent the too rapid growth of wealth and its accumulation in a few hands, he ordained that in every seventh year the debtors were to be released from their debts, and, where a man had sold himself to his brother, he was in that year to be released from slavery and to go free; even the land itself which might pass out of the possession of its owner by his sale of it, whether through his improvidence, mismanagement, or misfortune, could only be alienated until the year of jubilee. At the expiration of every forty-nine years the land reverted, without cost, to the man or family whose inheritance originally it was, except in the case of a dwelling house in a walled city, for the redemption of which, one year only was allowed, after which, if not redeemed, it became the property, without change at the year of jubilee, of the purchaser. Under such a system, carefully maintained, there could be no great aggregations of either real or personal property in the hands of a few; especially so while the laws, forbidding the taking of usury or interest for money or property loaned, continued in force.

One of the great evils with which our own nation is menaced at the present time is the wonderful growth of wealth in the hands of a comparatively few individuals. **The very liberties for which our fathers contended so steadfastly and courageously, and which they bequeathed to us as a priceless legacy, are endangered by the monstrous power which this accumulation of wealth gives to a few individuals and a few powerful corporations**. By its seductive influence results are accomplished which, were it more equally distributed, would be impossible under our form of government. It threatens to give shape to the legislation, both State and National, of the entire country. If this evil should not be checked, and measures not be taken to prevent the continued enormous growth of riches among the class already rich, and the painful increase of destitution and want among the poor, the nation is liable to be overtaken by disaster; for, according to history, such a tendency among nations once powerful was the sure precursor of ruin. The evidence of the restiveness of the people under this condition of affairs in our times is witnessed in the formation of societies of grangers, of patrons of husbandry, trades' unions, etc., etc., combinations of the productive and working classes against capital.

Years ago it was perceived that we Latter-day Saints were open to the same dangers as those which beset the rest of the world. A condition of affairs existed among us which was favorable to the growth of riches in the hands of a few at the expense of the many. A wealthy class was being rapidly formed in our midst whose interests, in the course of time, were likely to be diverse from those of the rest of the community. The growth of such a class was dangerous to our union; and, of all people, we stand most in need of union and to have our interests identical. Then it was that the Saints were counseled to enter into cooperation. In the absence of the necessary faith to enter upon a more perfect order revealed by the Lord unto the church, this was felt to be the best means of drawing us together

1 The original title was, “Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution.” See Messages of the First Presidency 2:267.

and making us one. ...

To-day, therefore, **cooperation among us is no untried experiment. It has been tested, and whenever fairly tested, and under proper management, its results have been most gratifying and fully equal to all that was expected of it**, though many attempts have been made to disparage and decry it, to destroy the confidence of the people in it and to have it prove a failure. ...

A union of interests was sought to be attained. At the time co-operation was entered upon the Latter-day Saints were acting in utter disregard of the principles of self-preservation. They were encouraging the growth of evils in their own midst which they condemned as the worst features of the systems from which they had been gathered. Large profits were being concentrated in comparatively few hands, instead of being generally distributed among the people. As a consequence, the community was being rapidly divided into classes, and the hateful and unhappy distinctions which the possession and lack of wealth give rise to, were becoming painfully apparent. ...

Co-operation has submitted in silence to a great many attacks. Its friends have been content to let it endure the ordeal. But it is now time to speak. The Latter-day Saints should understand that it is our duty to sustain cooperation and to do all in our power to make it a success. ...

Does not all our history impress upon us the great truth that in union is strength? Without it, what power would the Latter-day Saints have? But it is not in doctrines alone that we should be united, but in practice and especially in our business affairs.

Your Brethren,

Brigham Young

Charles C. Rich
George A. Smith
Lorenzo Snow
Daniel H. Wells
Erastus Snow
John Taylor
Franklin D. Richards

Wilford Woodruff
George Q. Cannon
Orson Hyde
Brigham Young, Jr.
Orson Pratt
Albert Carrington

Letter Questions

- When wealth is unequally distributed what does this lead to?
- How were debts handled in Old Testament times?
- What is the danger of great wealth in the hands of a few?
- What is the importance of co-operation and union?
- Has co-operation – when done rightly – succeeded?
- What is our duty?